

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, GR, US

SUBJECT: GREEK PRESS REPORTS PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS MAY VISIT
THE UNITED STATES

1. SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS HAVE CARRIED REPORTS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS THAT PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS HAS RECEIVED TWO INVITATIONS TO VISIT THE U.S. IN 1976, ONE PRIVATE AND ONE OFFICIAL IN NAGURE. IN RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES ON THIS QUESTION, A GREEK GOVERNMENT SOURCE HAS STATED THAT "IT IS PREMATURE" TO COMMENT ON IT. EMBASSY SPOKESMAN HAS SAID HE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT IT.

2. SATURDAY'S KATHIMERINI (INDEPENDENT, PRO-GOVERNMENT) FIRST PUBLISHED INFORMATION ON A PROPOSED CARAMANLIS VISIT TO THE U.S., IN AN ARTICLE APPARENTLY BASED ON AN EARLIER STORY IN THE NEW YORK CITY GREEK LANGUAGE PAPER ETHNIKOS KYRIX. THE KATHIMERINI PIECE ASSERTED THAT A DELEGATION FROM THE GREEK AMERICAN AHEPA ORGANIZATION HAD VISITED ATHENS EARLIER THIS MONTH ANDHAD INVITED
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THE PRIME MINISTER TO PARTICIPATE IN AN OFFICIAL

DINNER TO BE HOSTED BY THAT ORGANIZATION IN APRIL IN HONOR OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. AT THAT TIME, PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS WOULD OFFICIALLY ACCEPT THE SOCRATES PRIZE WHICH AHEPA HAD PREVIOUSLY AWARDED TO HIM. THE REPORT NOTED AS WELL THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD ALSO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY AT THAT TIME TO COME INTO CONTACT WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AS WELL AS WITH MANY GREEK AMERICANS. THE ARTICLE CONCLUDED WITH THE COMMENT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER THANKED THE AHEPA LEADERSHIP FOR BOTH THE PRIZE AND THE INVITATION TO THEIR APRIL DINNER, AND INDICATED HE WOULD GIVE A FINAL ANSWER WITHIN TWO WEEKS.

3. AKROPOLIS (CONSERVATIVE, PRO-GOVERNMENT) ON FEBRUARY 15 CARRIED A REPORT TO THE EFFECT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD RECEIVED AN "OFFICIAL INVITATION" FROM THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT TO VISIT WASHINGTON DURING 1976. THIS "INVITATION" WAS APPARENTLY TRANSMITTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A SERIES OF INVITATIONS FROM THE WHITE HOUSE TO CHIEFS OF STATE AND HEADS OF GOVERNMENT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, SEEKING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN A SPECIAL CELEBRATION IN WASHINGTON (AROUND JULY 4) IN HONOR OF OUR BICENTENNIAL YEAR. WERE CARAMANLIS TO ACCEPT, AKROPOLIS NOTES, HE WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE CONVERSATIONS WITH BOTH PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER. THE AKROPOLIS PIECE SUGGESTS, HOWEVER, THAT SINCE IT IS EXPECTED THAT PRESIDENT OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC CONSTANTINE TSATSOS WOULD REPRESENT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT AT THIS BICENTENNIAL OCCASION, IT IS LIKELY THAT PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS WILL VISIT WASHINGTON AT SOME OTHER TIME DURING THE YEAR. THE ARTICLE SPECULATES FURTHER THAT THE PM'S CURRENT DUTIES WOULD NOT PERMIT HIM TO MAKE THE TRIP TO AMERICA IN APRIL FOR THE AHEPA DINNER, BUT IT SUGGESTS THAT THE TRIP COULD BE REALIZED AT SOME TIME DURING THE LAST SIX MONTHS OF 1976, WHEN THERE WILL BE SPECIAL GREEK EXHIBITS AND ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN CONNECTION WITH THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR.

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4. TWO AFTERNOON NEWSPAPERS ON FEBRUARY 16 OFFER ADDITIONAL COMMENTS. APOYEVMATINI (CONSERVATIVE, PRO-GOVERNMENT) SUGGESTS THAT THE VISIT WILL BE CARRIED OUT PRIOR TO JULY, ALTHOUGH THE EXACT DATE HAS NOT YET BEEN SET. THE ARTICLE NOTES THAT WASHINGTON "HAS NEITHER DENIED NOR CONFIRMED" THE INFORMATION AND STATES AS WELL THAT "A VERY WELL

INFORMED SOURCE IN ATHENS" NOTED THAT "IT IS PREMATURE" TO COMMENT ABOUT A TRIP BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO WASHINGTON. SIMILARLY, VRADYNI (CONSERVATIVE, PRO-GOVERNMENT) REPORTED IN A FRONT PAGE BOX ON THE SAME DATE THAT "A GOVERNMENT SOURCE HAD CHARACTERIZED AS PREMATURE PUBLISHED INFORMATION CONCERNING PREPARATIONS FOR A CARAMANLIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON THIS SUMMER."

5. IN CONNECTION WITH THESE LATTER ASSERTIONS, A GOVERNMENT SOURCE ALSO "VERIFIED) THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE MAKING OFFICIAL VISITS TO VARIOUS ARAB COUNTRIES IN THE FUTURE -- INCLUDING SAUDI ARABIA -- BUT THE TIMING FOR THESE VISITS HAD NOT YET BEEN SET. AS A FURTHER COMPLICATING FACTOR, THE PRESS ALSO NOTED THAT DURING MAY OFFICIAL VISITS TO GREECE ARE EXPECTED BY THE GOVERNMENT LEADERS OF YUGOSLAVIA, BULGARIA, AND ROMANIA.
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